



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr.
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Director

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December 16, 2004

Philip A. Shucet, Commissioner
Department of Transportation
1401 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Phil:

DEQ held a series of public outreach meetings in October and November at our seven regional offices. One of the recurring themes we heard throughout the western half of the State was concern over increased air pollution from the proposed projects to widen I-81. If you go to our web site at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/info/meetings/homepage> you will see a summary of the comments DEQ heard at these meetings. We have also sent copies of the comments we received regarding the I-81 project to Phil Collins on your staff.

As you know, we have exceeded the national ozone standard in the Winchester and Roanoke areas and have found high levels of fine particulate in the Roanoke and Bristol areas. Because of this, I am particularly interested in ensuring the potential impacts to our air quality and other natural resources are fully evaluated and that appropriate steps are taken to minimize any adverse impacts. While DEQ participates in the evaluation of environmental impacts for VDOT projects, I believe that DEQ could provide more assistance if we participated in the Federal Highway Administration's partnering meetings for the review of the environmental impacts of the I-81 project. I would welcome any other suggestions you have on how DEQ can work more closely with VDOT on this project.

I have heard great things about VDOT's efforts to improve opportunities for public input, so I know you are probably already aware of these issues. These comments came to DEQ as a result of our community involvement initiative to learn more about the environmental interests of Virginians across the state. We have emphasized with the public that we will help address concerns they raised, and I will be happy to work with you to accomplish that. Please let me know if DEQ can provide any assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert G. Burnley", followed by a vertical line.

Robert G. Burnley

RGB:dlm